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ABSTRACT

This book analyzes the history of vocational education for girls in the United States since about 1900. The analysis is developed from the larger issues raised by what turn-of-the-century educators called "the woman question," or "What ought woman to be?" The book analyzes competing ideologies and correlates prescriptions with politics and practices in vocational education. The women who actively shaped policy and carried out a variety of different programs are profiled. The book documents that home economics training, rather than being a means of social salvation, became a vehicle of class and racial stratification. The analysis shows that young women and their parents, pushed by opposition from unions, steered clear of blue collar jobs and turned instead to commercial education. Although business education had made no claims, it provided a pathway into respectable jobs, especially when compared to factory work. The book also traces the history of federal support for vocational education, especially that provided by the Smith-Hughes legislation. (KC)

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